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The DIA Is as Good as the CIA

Adm. Stansfield Turner tried to rewrite history in his article, "The Pentagon's Intelligence Mess" [Outlook, Jan. 12].

He suggests, as the subhead states, that "a weak [Defense Intelligence Agency] can't cope with the parochialism of the military." As director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Turner should have become more familiar with the operations of the DIA and military intelligence. His incorrect and dated opinions need correcting for the insult they bring to the U.S. intelligence community and the American people.

The truth is, the DIA continues to make major contributions to the national security of the United States by providing objective intelligence analysis to the secretary of defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the U.S. military forces, the White House and Congress.

Turner errs when he claims that the DIA is dominated by military service parochialism. There are two factors that sustain DIA's ability to provide objective intelligence to senior policy makers. First, the DIA's staff is on the leading analytical edge of most military intelligence issues. While this may not have been true in the early years of the agency, its civilian staff is now mature and, joined with outstanding intelligence officers with broad field experience, the DIA's defense analysis is unsurpassed.

Second, the DIA works because all its directors have demanded uncompromising, objective intelligence reporting on all issues. The secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs not only support this DIA policy, they insist on it.

One major U.S. intelligence product is the "National Estimate on Soviet Strategic Offensive and Defense Capabilities." During Turner's tenure at the CIA, the DIA did disagree with most of the intelligence community; it offered alternative positions on the subject of Soviet nuclear war doctrine and its strategic force posture objectives. DIA positions from 1975 to 1979 on the objectives of Soviet strategic force expansions, extensive leadership survivability programs and enormous strategic defense investments have proved correct and are now accepted by the intelligence community.

Turner attributes the DIA position on "net assessments" to a "parochial motive." The simple attempts at net assessments which Turner pushed at the time were, in fact, not useful to furthering policy makers' understanding of the true U.S. and Soviet strategic balance and represented the classic MAD position that has been rejected by every U.S. administration since 1961.

Turner's account of the DIA-CIA oil controversy is riddled with errors. In April 1977, the CIA predicted that Soviet oil production would peak as early as 1978 and then fall sharply, forcing the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe to become net oil importers by 1985. This assessment was leading some to believe that the U.S.S.R. would take military action to gain access to Persian Gulf oil resources.

DIA's reason for challenging the CIA was not, as Turner suggests, merely to assert its independence. We disagreed with the CIA's judgment that Soviet recoverable reserves were inadequate and that the Soviets would be unable to acquire the necessary equipment and technology. The DIA took into consideration Soviet resources in natural gas, coal, nuclear power, as well as Soviet oil reserves, and concluded that the Soviets had no energy crisis, nor was there likely to be one in the future. An April 1982 review of the differing views, entitled "Report on Intelligence Performance on Soviet Oil Production," concluded that the DIA's large data base on the subject and its sophisticated analysis had led it to the correct conclusion. The Soviets would not be a net importer of oil by the 1980s. The DIA, not the CIA, was correct.

Turner fails to describe accurately the DIA's working relationship with the CIA and the military intelligence staffs. There is not an adversarial relationship with either, only healthy checks and balances.

Turner implies that the services do not assign their best officers to DIA. There may have been some truth to this observation early in the agency's existence, but no longer. DIA employees have gone on to senior positions. For example, three have become deputy directors of the CIA, three to direct the National Security Agency, three to serve as chiefs of staff for intelligence and numerous flag officers have risen to two- , three- and four-star ranks within their services.

Today the DIA is the recognized expert in critical military intelligence. With its partners in the CIA, State Department and the military services, it provides the best intelligence in the world.

—Lt. Gen. Eugene F. Tighe Jr.

The writer was director of the DIA from 1977 to 1981.

C.I.A.'s Security Was Lax, According to Convicted Spy

Special to The New York Times

MANASSAS, Va, Feb. 10 — Larry Wu-Tai Chin, the former C.I.A. analyst convicted last week of spying for China for 30 years, said today that it was "easy" to evade the Central Intelligence Agency's security procedures and steal reams of classified documents.

In his first interview since his arrest last November, Mr. Chin said he was never searched when he left work at the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, an arm of the C.I.A. that translates and interprets material gathered from radio broadcasts and newspapers.

"It was easy to do," he recalled. "They do not search your body when you go out." Mr. Chin said he was giving the interview to two reporters because he was eager to tell his story. He said he originally talked to F.B.I. agents about his activities because "consciously or unconsciously I wanted the world to know what I did was for the good of U.S.-Chinese relations."

Mr. Chin was convicted last week by a Federal jury on charges of espionage, conspiracy and filing false tax returns. No date has been set for his sentencing.

C.I.A.'s Security Questioned

The case has raised several questions about the C.I.A.'s security procedures. A memorandum filed by the prosecution shows that Mr. Chin was given only one polygraph, or lie-detector, test in his 30 years as a contract employee and staff officer.

Mr. Chin was given the polygraph test in 1970, after he was hired as a full-time intelligence officer in the headquarters of foreign broadcast service in northern Virginia. It was the standard polygraph given to all prospective C.I.A. employees.

In the next 11 years Mr. Chin never again underwent a polygraph exam, even though in 1974 his security clearance was upgraded from top secret to "top secret, codeword," a higher classification, according to trial testimony.

In the same period Mr. Chin was audited seven times by the Internal Revenue Service, which questioned whether his salary as a Government employee could support the expenses he was showing from his array of rental properties.

Defector Tipped Off Officials

But suspicions at the C.I.A. were not raised until 1983, when intelligence sources say a high-level Chinese defector tipped off American officials.

Prosecutors contended that Mr. Chin was paid more than $150,000 by the Chinese. They said he maintained multiple foreign bank accounts, owned gold overseas and held title to about 30 rental properties.

Mr. Chin said he believed that a security agent from the C.I.A. covertly interviewed him once, in 1976 or 1980. He recalled that a person identifying himself as a Commerce Department official came to his house in Dale City, Va., and asked him about his sources of income and where he bought his furniture. He said he believed the person was really a C.I.A. agent.

"I said most of my furniture was bought from yard sales, which was true," said Mr. Chin. " I lived very modestly."

Stansfield Turner, Director of the C.I.A. under President Carter, said in an interview last year that potentially lax security at the agency was a major concern in his tenure. Mr. Turner said he had instituted random searches of briefcases at the agency's headquarters offices in Langley, Va., but he said he was unsure whether these procedures were used at the Foreign Broadcast Information Service office.

Documents Under His Coat

"One of my first impressions when I went to work at the C.I.A. w as that security was terrible," said Mr. Turner.

Mr. Chin testified at his trial that he hid documents in his coat.

A C.I.A. spokesman declined to say whether the Chin case and the conviction on espionage charges of Sharon Scranage, another C.I.A. employee, had prompted any specific changes. "We're always looking at security procedures, said Kathy Pherson, the spokesman. "It's not going to be one event that causes us to look at things."

In a 30-minute interview at the Prince William-Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center, Mr. Chin quoted from Chinese military strategists and world history to justify his decision to steal classified documents and provide them to the Chinese.

One of only two C.I.A employees convicted of espionage while employed by the agency, Mr. Chin's motivation and character set him apart from others charged in the recent spate of spy cases. His C.I.A. personnel files show his supervisors were highly impressed with his abilities as a linguist and interpreter of Chinese political developments.

Mr. Chin said he had no regrets about his decision to talk with F.B.I. agents last Nov. 22. The agents confronted him with an account of his activities that intelligence sources say was gleaned from a high-level Chinese defector. Mr. Chin told the agents that night that he began spying for the Chinese in 1952, when he told a Chinese intelligence agent about his interviews of Chinese prisoners of war in Korea.

But today Mr. Chin said he did not begin stealing documents until 1970, when he joined the headquarters of broadcast service and was given a clearance to top-secret material. That year, he said he came across a classified message from President Nixon to Congress outlining his hopes for a reconciliation with China.

United Press International

Larry Wu-Tai Chin

He said he was hoping to bolster the pragmatic faction in China, led at the time by Zhou Enlai. With the secret documents, Mr. Chin said he hoped to accelerate a warming of relations between the United States and China..

"When I think about what I have accomplished — the improvement of of the livelihood of one billion Chinese people — my imprisonment for life is a very small price to pay," he said. "It was worth it. I have nothing to regret."

Mr. Chin, a tall, thin man, read from a single handwritten sheet of paper in which 20 points for the interview where set out in Chinese characters. He called himself a "patriotic American" and acknowledged that he had no right to make on his own momentous decisions about American foreign policy.

Still, he said, "The ends justify the means."

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